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Senate

The Senate met at 2 p.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JIM WEBB, a Senator from the Commonwealth of Virginia.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

God of new beginnings, the author and sustainer of our faith, thank You for this fresh start as we begin this fall session of the Senate. Bless our lawmakers to strive to do Your will, empowering them with greater knowledge and discernment so that they may approve the things that are excellent. Lord, give them a productivity that comes from the power of Your spirit, using them to do Your work on Earth. Show them Your greatness and Your mighty hand, for You are the God of our salvation. You are our rock, our fortress, and our deliverer; we will trust in Your strength to preserve this land we love.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable JIM WEBB led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. INOUE).

The bill clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, September 6, 2011.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable JIM WEBB, a Senator from the Commonwealth of Virginia, to perform the duties of the Chair.

DANIEL K. INOUE,
President pro tempore.

Mr. WEBB thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Following leader remarks, the Senate will proceed to a period of morning business until 5 p.m. During that period of time, Senators will be permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

At 5 p.m., the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the nomination of Bernice Bouie Donald of Tennessee to be U.S. circuit judge for the Sixth Circuit. There will be 30 minutes of debate, equally divided, prior to the vote on confirmation of the nomination.

Upon disposition of the Donald nomination, the Senate will resume consideration and vote on the motion to proceed to invoke cloture on the patent reform bill. Senators should expect two rollcall votes this evening about 5:30 p.m.

JOBS AGENDA

Mr. President, first of all, I welcome the Presiding Officer and everyone back to the Senate after the August recess, as well as my good friend, the Republican leader.

I look forward to the No. 1 priority we have; that is, job creation. This isn't just a conversation among those of us in the Senate. The American people agree that is the No. 1 priority we should have.

I am sorry to say Republicans have distracted Congress from its most im-

portant responsibility—getting our economy back to work and back on track. That means jobs. We have been distracted time and time again. They have filed endless amendments on legislation that should engender bipartisan support. They have killed good bills with obstructionism and stall tactics. They have dragged out votes to continue funding the government. They did that on the CR we worked on for weeks and weeks, and all we were trying to do was to fund the government until October 1 and to avert a default crisis. Votes that normally had been routine under Democratic and Republican administrations were not with this Republican obstructionism we have had.

President Reagan asked Congress to extend the debt ceiling 18 times, and it was done 18 times. But this year—not like the era of President Reagan, when the debt was increasing significantly as a result of his agenda—our jobs agenda was held up and set aside for months. The work of Congress and our ability to do something about the economy was being held hostage. Rather than working with Democrats to pass job-creating legislation, Republicans insisted on reckless cuts that hurt our economic recovery.

Economists—take, for example, Mark Zandi, certainly a person who has shown some bipartisanship, worked for JOHN MCCAIN as his economic adviser and who is now in the private sector—have said we have to cut spending, and we have all acknowledged that. We agree with Mark Zandi. But we also agree with economist Mark Zandi in saying we have to be very careful about how we cut now because of the difficult times we are going through. We cut significantly in programs that create jobs, but we did it because we have to get this debt under control.

As my friend said, his No. 1 goal is to defeat President Obama—my friend the Republican leader. With that as the No. 1 goal, it makes it very difficult to get things done around here.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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